The treatment of detected offences in regard to fire protection is tabulated below in the form required by the Government of India in their Resolution quoted in paragraph 64 of this report :—

| Division. | Details of prosecutions for offences by fire. | | | | | | Remarks. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Serial number of fire. | Acres burnt. | Character of offence (whether careless or intentional). | Whether acquitted or convicted. | Section of law under which convicted. | Amount of punishment. | |
| Sukkur ... | 1 | 1 | Intentional. | Convicted. | S. 25 of I. F. Act, 1878. | Fine Rs. 25. | |
| Sukkur ... | 2 | 250 | „ | ... | ... | ... | Case pending in Court. |
| Sukkur ... | 3 | 25 | „ | ... | ... | ... | Do. |
| Naushahro ... | 1 | ... | „ | Acquitted. | ... | ... | The offender did not actually set fire, but was attempting to do it. |
| Hyderabad ... | ... | ... | ... | .. | ... | ... | |
| Jerruck ... | 1 | 21 | Intentional. | Convicted. | (*b*) S. 25 of I. F. Act, 1878. | Two persons fined Rs. 5 each. | |
| Total ... | 5 | 297 | | | | | |

68. The following is a statement of the causes of the different fires, prepared in accordance with the instructions contained in the Resolution quoted above :—

| Division. | (A.) Fire caused by accident or through carelessness in burning fire lines. | | (B.) Fire entering the forests by crossing exterior fire traces. | | (C.) Fire beginning inside the Reserve or fire-traced area. | | | | | | | | | | | | Cases unknown. | | Total A, B and C. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Owing to carelessness or accident. | | | | | | By intentional firing. | | | | | | Total. | | | | | |
| | | | | | By workmen employed in the forests, by purchasers of forest produce and by yahcutters | | By villagers, travellers, &c., passing through the forests. | | By Railway engines. | | By lightning or by fire balloons. | | In order to obtain new grass. | | In order to turn out game or to reduce cover. | | Maliciously fired. | | | | | | | |
| | No. of fires. | Area burnt in acres. | No. of fires. | Area burnt in acres. | No. of fires. | Area burnt in acres. | No. of fires. | Area burnt in acres. | No. of fires. | Area burnt in acres. | No. of fires. | Area burnt in acres. | No. of fires. | Area burnt in acres. | No. of fires. | Area burnt in acres. | No. of fires. | Area burnt in acres. | No. of fires. | Area burnt in acres. | No. of fires. | Area burnt in acres. | No. of fires. | Area burnt in acres. |
| Sukkur ... | ... | ... | 5 | 77 | 2 | 51 | 4 | 233 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 16 | 805 | ... | ... | 1 | 250 | 23 | 1,339 | ... | ... | 28 | 1,416 |
| Naushahro.. | 1 | 4 | 2 | 48 | ... | ... | 8 | 46 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 8 | 46 | 1 | 183 | 11 | 98 |
| Hyderabad.. | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 | 850 | 8 | 171 | 2 | 35 | ... | ... | 3 | 145 | ... | ... | 1 | 40 | 16 | 1,241 | ... | ... | 16 | 1,241 |
| Jerruck ... | 3 | 138 | 2 | 30 | 2 | 123 | 8 | 696 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | 50 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 11 | 869 | ... | ... | 16 | 1,037 |
| Total ... | 4 | 142 | 9 | 155 | 6 | 1,024 | 28 | 1,146 | 2 | 35 | ... | ... | 20 | 1,000 | ... | ... | 2 | 290 | 58 | 3,495 | 1 | 183 | 71 | 3,792 |

69. The most serious case of fire (paragraph 67) occurred in the Unarpur Range of the Hyderabad Division, burning 750 acres, and was suspected to have been caused by the labourers who had been engaged by the coupe contractor to work for him. The principal constituent of this tract being exploitable bahan, growing amongst a dense mass of reeds, it was thought that, to facilitate exploitation, the fire was intentionally lighted. There was naturally no proof to connect any individual with the crime, and the contractor could not be taken to task as, under his agreement, he was able to prove that his workmen were employed in another part of the forest on the day the fire occurred. There being, however, a very strong suspicion, especially as his workmen would be the only gainers by the burning of the grass in that locality, that the fire was lighted by some one of them, the extraction of small bahan timber was immediately prohibited from the burnt compartments. Once the grass was got rid of, the daily outturn of work would be considerable, and almost double wages could be earned for the rest of the season. The prohibition enforced, therefore, deprived them from realising any advantage they might have sought to obtain.

70. As a rule, the number of fires for obtaining a fresh crop of grass exceeds that originating from any other cause. But from the figures shown in the above statement it will appear that, during the year of this report, that cause has not been the principal source of mischief, no less than 28 fires of the total number having been attributed to the carelessness of villagers and travellers passing through the forests on their way to and from the ferries on the river.

*(3) Regulation of Grazing and Protection from Cattle.*

**(a) Grazing Regulations.**

Grazing regulations.

71. There is nothing special to note under grazing arrangements in addition to what has been already recorded in former reports. They are suited to the Province and, having been in force for the last quarter of a century, the people seem to be well satisfied with them. The quality of the grazing in Sind is liable to changes,

which cannot be foreseen, depending as it does on the greater or less extent to which the annual floods reach the forests, or, at times, never touching them at all, when the river recedes and leaves them high and dry. In a couple of forests, the grazing having been found undoubtedly to have become worse, a lower scale of fees was charged in them on a representation to that effect having been made by the cattle owners and villagers living in their vicinity.

(*b*) **Protection from Cattle.**

Area opened and closed to grazing.

72. Form No. 54 gives the areas closed and open to grazing during the year 1896-97, which, as compared with those of the year before, show that against all animals the area of closures has risen from $79\frac{199}{640}$ to $108\frac{168}{640}$ square miles, and that against browsers from $167\frac{607}{640}$ to $373\frac{435}{640}$ square miles. The areas given in column 3 of Form No. 54 for both years ($19\frac{127}{640}$ and $22\frac{267}{640}$, respectively), it has to be noted, are temporary punitive closures for the prevention of forest fires, the object being to keep out cattle of the incendiary *maldars* from grazing on the fresh and nutritious crop of grass which springs up almost at once in the fired tracts, and thereby defeating the very purpose they have in view.

73. The extent of the closures in each division at the commencement and close of the year, with other details, is given in the following statement :—

| Division. | AREA IN SQUARE MILES. | | | | | | | | Total area of Reserved Forests. | Percentage of total area closed. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Closed at commencement of the year. | | Opened during the year. | | New closures of the year. | | Closed at the end of the year. | | | |
| | Whole year | Part of year. | Whole year. | Part of year. | Whole year. | Part of year. | Whole year. | Part of year. | | |
| | | | | | *All animals.* | | | | | |
| Sukkur ... ... | 17 359 | 12 148 | ... | 7 552 | 16 299 | 18 31 | 34 18 | 22 267 | 449 358 | 12 |
| Naushahro ... | 7 382 | ... | 3 354 | ... | 6 85 | ... | 10 113 | ... | 245 0 | 4 |
| Hyderabad ... | 22 153 | ... | ... | ... | 7 145 | ... | 29 298 | ... | 185 577 | 16 |
| Jerruck ... | 12 19 | ... | 4 245 | ... | 4 338 | ... | 12 112 | ... | 183 346 | 7 |
| Total ... | 59 273 | 12 148 | 7 599 | 7 552 | 34 227 | 18 31 | 85 541 | 22 267 | 1,064 1 | 10 |
| | | | | | *Browsers.* | | | | | |
| Sukkur ... ... | 1 262 | 80 467 | ... | ... | 142 597 | ... | 225 46 | ... | 449 358 | 50 |
| Naushahro ... | 42 413 | ... | 1 160 | ... | 58 227 | ... | 99 480 | ... | 245 0 | 41 |
| Hyderabad ... | 43 39 | ... | 3 411 | 3 80 | ... | ... | 36 188 | ... | 185 577 | 19 |
| Jerruck ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 12 361 | ... | 12 361 | ... | 183 346 | 7 |
| Total ... | 87 74 | 80 467 | 4 571 | 3 80 | 213 545 | ... | 373 435 | ... | 1,064 1 | 35 |

74. Cultural operations having been undertaken on a larger scale than before not only in the felled coupes of the year, but in blanks both in the Sukkur and Naushahro Divisions, it naturally follows that the area closed to all animals must be greater. At the same time, it will be noticed that, in accordance with the instructions quoted in paragraph 62 of the report for 1894-95, an aggregate area of $12\frac{53}{64}$ square miles, in which reproduction was assured and the further prohibition of grazing wherein would simply be a source of annoyance to the villagers, was re-opened. The almost irretrievable damage which is being committed by browsers in Upper and Central Sind had, moreover, to be checked. Hence, the increase in the area closed to such animals.

Impoundings of cattle.

75. The number of cattle impounded during the year under report and the year before in open and closed forests is given below :—

| Division. | From open forests. | | From closed forests. | | Total. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1895-96. | 1896-97. | 1895-96. | 1896-97. | 1895-96. | 1896-97. |
| | No. | No. | No. | No. | No. | No. |
| Sukkur ... ... | 5,465 | 7,025 | 3,856 | 9,734 | 9,321 | 16,759 |
| Naushahro ... ... | 2,630 | 1,703 | 3,905 | 5,268 | 6,535 | 6,971 |
| Hyderabad ... ... | 2,670 | 1,716 | 6,082 | 7,583 | 8,752 | 9,299 |
| Jerruck ... ... | 804 | 923 | 3,427 | 3,507 | 4,231 | 4,430 |
| Total ... | 11,569 | 11,367 | 17,270 | 26,092 | 28,839 | 37,459 |

76. The impoundings for the whole Circle from open forests vary but little, the larger number in the Sukkur and Jerruck Divisions being nearly counterbalanced by the smaller